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Economic Condition of the Tribals in the District of Ganjam

H. K. Ghosh

The area of the district of Ganjam is 4,83,504 square miles with a population of 16,24,829 out of which 1,12,006 belong to Scheduled Tribes. Out of the total area of the district an area of 1303 sq. miles with a population of 1,55,990 has been declared as scheduled areas under paragraph 6 of the 5th schedule of the constitution of India.

The two chief tribes of the district are Khonds and Saoras, their population being approximately 10,500 and 50,000 respectively who reside in the scheduled areas of the district. Some of these tribes have also settled in the plains and have lost their own primitive culture and traditions.

General description of the tribes :
Aborigines of Ganjam like those all over India fall into two distinct classes. The true highlanders who have retained much of their own culture and live a

full life in the hills, and the aborigines of the plains who have slowly drifted from their mountain heights and have largely assimilated the culture and customs of their more sophisticated neighbours. The plains aborigines like the Kampa Saoras of parlakimedi Taluk, the Sudha Savaras and many of the Khonds do not present a problem greatly different from that of the non-Adibasi rural population with whom they live. Many of them are poor, miserable and diseased. They need immediate assistance. But the true highlanders who live on the hill tops and slopes like the Langia Saoras and Kuttia Khonds are some of the most ancient peoples of India. These tribes are believed by anthropologists to be descendants of that very ancient Palaeolithic civilisation formerly widespread in South East Asia which spread into peninsular India as far back as

neolithic times. These tribes still have their austroasiatic tongue and preserve many cultural elements that find parallels in Assam, Malaya, Luzon and the Pacific Islands. These people have maintained their moral and their will-to-happiness.

Occupation of the tribes :—The main occupation of the aborigines of the district is agriculture and collection of jungle produce. The main crops are paddy, ragi and other dry grains and oil-seeds like niger and castor. The forest areas in many places are very extensive. There are a few heights which reach 5,000 feet. There are quite a few perennial streams, also. But the forests are being destroyed by the primitive Podu system of agriculture pursued by the aborigines and by forest fires. As a result many perennial streams have disappeared and summer flow of rivers is diminishing slowly but steadily. The aborigines have taken recourse to "Podu" or "Aze" cultivation since most of the flat lands occupied by them have gradually been snatched away from them by the non-aborigines by dishonest means. Wherever they have got sufficient flat lands

or paddy lands they do not take to Podu cultivation. The Lanjia Saura however constructs terraces on the hill slopes for cultivation. The real life of the Lanjia Saura is on the terrace. It is on this that he expends his most loving and industrious care and even the axe clearings are often built up by stone walls into rough terraces. The terraces of the Lanjia Sauras are marvels of primitive engineering. Every field is protected by stone walls. From morning till night they are busy on the terraces. The Sauras take to "Podu" cultivation as only a subsidiary occupation using it only for cultivation of pulses and small millets by not deliberately cutting trees for use as beam stalks and by not ploughing over the clearings as the Kondhs usually do. The Khonds, are much more destructive in this respect. They depend almost entirely on Podu cultivation and have to go in for it to a much greater extent having lost the lands in the plains to the non-aborigines. This practice of cultivation called 'Podu' is done by cutting and burning forests on tops and slopes of hills and raising two or at most three annual crops on the ground and

then abandoning that land until the trees have grown again sufficiently to admit a second felling. This process continues until the land gets washed so bare of soil and seed that no more forest growth is possible. It is thus finally abandoned and there remains a bare hill side useless for any purpose, producing only thorns, creepers and coarse grass. In the Podu lands only dry crops are raised. A particular crop is not grown in any one season as the growing of mixed crops is a rule rather than an exception. A variety of grains are broadcast. In some places valuable commercial crops such as turmeric, castor, brinjal, plantain and chillies are raised. The dry crops generally grown on Podu lands are Ragi, Redgrain, Jodanga, Baila (creeper), Kangu, horsegram, Ghantis, Maize, Castor and other hill products.

Besides being a positive source of evil the Podu cultivation is itself inherently defective and economically unsound. The average yield of each crop on an acre of Podu land is $2\frac{1}{2}$ potties besides about $1\frac{1}{2}$ potties of creeper grains. The total yield is thus 4 potties

whereas in the low lying country on the plains the average yield per acre is 8 to 10 potties. Commercial crops are generally not grown on the hills. Generally the aborigines have taken recourse to Podu cultivation as a subsidiary occupation while in some remote cases specially in Khond areas, they do Podu exclusively mostly due to nonavailability of land in the plains. Besides the Village Headmen in the agency areas often encourage Podu cultivation for getting money from the aborigines. There is also a long standing habit among the aborigines to abandon old villages and from new ones. This habit is partly responsible for Podu cultivation. In the entire Agency portion of the district there are about 12,600 acres under Podu cultivation.

Agricultural holding of the aborigines.—The agency areas of the district have not yet been surveyed. So it is not possible to say accurately the extent of land owned by the aborigines. But from a very rough estimate it is found that there are 75,600 acres of cultivated land both dry and wet. Out of that more than 30,000

acres are owned by non-aborigines. Again out of the land available for the aborigines the extent of paddy land is very scanty and the crops raised by the aborigines are subject to the ravages of the wild animals. Due to these facts the aborigines of the district are not fortunate to have a rice diet throughout the year. In most cases they have to depend on the roots and leafy plants for two to three months in a year.

Land tenure system.—The aborigines enjoy lands free of assessment, but pay *mamul* in cash and kind to the Muthahads and their subordinates. This *mamul* system peculiar to the Ganjam Agency and in course of time has been historically connected with the system of land administration though it is not in any sense legally connected with it. This acquired a sanctity through established usages, extending over a long time and in the beginning was considered to be in conformity with the principles of justice and equity. The sole object of this "mamul" system was to keep the aborigines under check and control through the agency of non-origine chiefs known as

Muthahads stationed in the locality.

The need for having such hill chiefs with a regular hierarchy of subordinate local officials was no doubt a necessity during the early parts of 19th century, when the indigenous hill races the Khonds and the Sauras-illiterate and ignorant of the ways of the world and yet ready to go on the war path when any of their many susceptibilities are wounded, were very turbulent and were considered to be dangerous neighbours to others living in the plains.

After the advent of the British rule the old administrative organisation in the Agency areas, being divided into Muthas each under a Bissoyee or a Patra with his militia of Hodadars and Patils was allowed to continue. They were made responsible for controlling the hill tribes and maintaining peace and good order as before. They were also allowed not only to enjoy the usufructs of some lands in their respective areas in which their services were required but also the customary *mamul* paid by the hill tribes. These *mamul* have continued for over a century. They



Guarding the field

are paid either in cash or in kind. These mamuls consist of several items and the system was so very exhaustive that it never gave a chance to the hill tribes to improve their lot. For the first time a list of various kinds of mamul paid by the aborigines to the hill chiefs and their subordinates was compiled by Mr. Taylor, the then Collector of Ganjam in the year 1900 in his book "Taylors Memoirs". The Partially Excluded areas Enquiry Committee has rightly remarked that the mamul system is inherently bad in as much as it is troublesome for realisation on the part of the Muthaders and further the Muthaders harass the hill people by exorbitant demands.

In course of time the limited purpose of the "mamul" has been lost sight of and they have been increased and worked out with a view to provide ample income for the Hodadars and the Muthabenda. The mamul were till now a great and a increasing burden on the hillmen, out of proportion to the services rendered by the Patros and Bissayees and far in excess of what the hillmen would have given to

Government in the shape of reasonable assessment on each holding. These mamul were so variegated and miscellaneous in nature that it is doubtful that in that distant part they were ever collected in full by the Muthabenda. The Muthabenda realised it too well that a complete hold over the Adibasis would be secured if in addition to the man-power they had at their disposal to compel mamul they could appeal to the religious and superstitious traits in the character of the Adibasis. They installed Oriya deities and secured some mamul in the name of the deity so imposed. For the first time in 1903 the Adibasis seem to have started questioning the mamul system. Government on becoming aware of this fact and of the fact that the mamul recognised and prescribed was based on no reasonable standards, issued orders that recorded mamul could be revised by the Agent to the Governor subject to the parties agreeing to such revision. The abolition of miscellaneous mamul was made in the year 1949, but these orders did not reach the remote agency areas & had hardly any immediate effect. They had

to be republished in the year 1954 and again in the year 1955. Abolition of these mamuls was a considerable relief. But the remaining "Sanja" mamuls and the "Che" mamuls i. e., rent payable in kind or cash was also found to be quite exorbitant. A Special Officer was, therefore, appointed & there have now been commuted to cash under orders of Government at Rs. 1/- per acre of paddy land.

Other economic exploitation:—

The aborigines of the district are subjected to various forms of exploitations which are mainly responsible for their wretched economic condition.

1. Perpetual indebtedness:—

The domestic economy of the Khonds and Sauras and their rural economy is in a very primitive state. Their common needs are very few and easily satisfied and their needs are of such easy nature that the aborigines always 'remain' confident that their income would cover their expenditure. With this self assurance they plod on till a sickness, a marriage or death ceremony overtakes them and overthrows the balance of their domestic

economy. They are addicted to drinking and more so on occasions of festivals and ceremonies. They spend extravagantly on marriage. Again the aborigines are very superstitious in many of their beliefs. They do not use any medicine for cure of their illness except trying to propitiate their Gods. The Sauras as a tribe are obsessed with the thought of death and the menace of the other world. All disease, all domestic or economic tragedy is the work of irritable ghosts who must be instantly appeased. When, therefore, someone in the family gets a touch of fever the Saura assuming that his deceased wife's deceased uncle is annoyed with him, rushes off to get a pig or a buffalo to sacrifice. Being in a highly excited state of mind he agrees to pay any price so long as he can get what he wants quickly. The money-lenders who are present among the aborigines watching carefully the needs of the aborigines and are always ready with tempting offers of cash loan or supply of animals on credit to suit their requirements. Thus the aborigines come under the clutches of the money-lenders and become an easy prey in the money lending trap. The money

lenders in most cases at the time of making the advance deduct the total interest of the year from the principal though the borrower is made to sign that he has received full payment. Often the money lenders procure from the debtors their signature on a blank paper and then put down any figure they like. These things rarely come to the notice of the law courts since the aborigines are ignorant and do not dare to bring to the notice of the officers the mal-practices of the wily creditors. The rate of interest charged is exorbitant and it has got at the hands of the unscrupulous creditors a peculiar way of doubling itself after the first year. The interest swells. The principal remains unpaid. All the payments made by the debtors every year either by cash or in kind are adjusted towards the interest. Thus the debtors remain perpetually indebted to the money lenders. It cannot but be admitted that the rural indebtedness of the aborigines owing to a degenerated system of money-lending is a living cancer that has eaten into the very vitals of the economic life of the aborigines of the district.

Lack of proper marketing facilities.— The staple products of the aborigines are turmeric, pulses millet and oil seeds like mustard gingelly, niger and castor. Arrowroot is grown in parts. Oranges are also grown in some parts of R. Udayagiri and Paralakhemundi Taluka. Among the products collected and sold by the aborigines tamarind comes first. Most of these products are exported from the Agency areas to the plains through the petty traders and Sahukars who again supply the daily necessities of life of the aborigines which mainly comprise of salt, dry fish, onion, clothes, utensils, imported from the plains. The proper marketing of the goods with a view to secure a fair price for the agricultural or other forest produce of the Adibans is an important problem. The Adibans of this district are generally deprived of the benefit of proper marketing of their produce to secure a fair price and getting their daily necessities of life at reasonable prices, owing to their idleness ignorance, poverty and indebtedness. The Adibans generally do not like to come to the bazar. They mostly depend on

their daily necessities of life that can have at their doors. Even if they come to the markets they are indifferent customers. They do not take the trouble of ascertaining the correct price for the commodities they purchase from a number of shopkeepers. Therefore they pay high prices. They purchase their requirements like tobacco, salt, dried fish through barter exchange and thereby they are cheated badly by the traders. The few examples given below will indicate the extent of exploitation to which the ignorant and simple aborigines are subjected to.

1. One adda of blackgram (one Adda = 60 talas) worth 0-3-0 is exchanged for one adda of salt worth one anna.
2. One adda of Jhudanga worth 0-6-0 is exchanged for one adda of salt worth one anna.
3. One pumpkin worth 0-3-0 is exchanged for 1½ adda of salt worth 0-1-4.

In respect of marketing of the produce the Adibasis do not get a fair deal. In marketing of their produce they are exploited by the Panoes and other middlemen who live on the aborigines. The Pano

is the same as the Dom, Panka or Ganda, the great untouchable weaver caste of Central India, sometimes regarded as a criminal tribe everywhere held in social detestation as the lowest of the low. But in the Agency areas of this district the Panoes have established themselves in close contact with the aborigines living side by side with them though in separate hamlets. Originally probably they came to provide the people with cloth. They have been described in the oldest memories as a sharp, intelligent race with a rapid tendency to assimilate. From the mythology of the Khonds it is not clear as to when the Pano came into his life. In fact the Pano does not get any mention in the mythology of the Khond. But that he came into the area long ago and that too when the aborigines were probably naked savage is evident from many salient points. The Pano is the weaver of the area today and that would take us to believe that he was the man who captured the imagination of aborigines by showing them clothes and by teaching them their use. But their superior cunning and intelligence, however, has now



Snowing in the hills

made them much more than mere weavers. They now become the agents, money lenders and advisers of the aborigines. They have now made an extraordinary and sinister dominion over them. In the Khond area they have an important place in society. They are the middlemen who market the produce of the Khond and who cater to his needs by way of supplying his requirements. The Pano has no title to any tribal land and as a child of the soil even though he is seen in some cases to have become a prosperous landowner now-a-days. By nature the Khond is indolent and lordly and is loath, to go out of his village leaving the village society and drinking bouts there. He has an inferiority complex and fears that he would be cheated. These and other reasons prevent him from making attempts to market his products. The Pano is perhaps also responsible to no small degree in this since he offers to do the marketing facility. He (Pano) on account of his mixed origin and the commercially developed mental outfit is able to do better in this direction. Due to the feeling of inferiority and familiarity with which the

Khond looks upon the Pano the latter is able to coax and cajole and take enormous profit with the knowledge and acquaintance of the Khond who consoles himself with the belief that the services of the Pano rendered to him deserves concession. The Pano of the southern Agency is more sharp than his brother in the Khond hills and knows better how to cater to the whims of the Saurs who are far more industrious mostly busy in their terrace cultivation. One important characteristic of the Saur is that unless it is absolutely necessary he would not venture out of his village. The Pano who is aware of the secret goes to the Saur to his house on the hill tops and thrusts his wares on the Saur and arranges that the price shall be paid in grain at the next harvest at very cheap rates plus an appropriate interest. When harvest time comes round the Pano spends his days standing on the Saur's threshing floor, scooping in his dues in baskets full without any proper heed to the exact amount he takes. Thus the Saur does not get an opportunity to market his produce and get a fair price for the same.

In addition to the facts stated above lack of communication facilities also stands on the way of providing marketing facilities in the tribal areas and therefore the tribals are compelled to sell their produce to the middlemen at their doors at very low prices. Moreover, the houses of the aborigines, as they are usually constructed do not allow them to stock and store their produce for sale at future date. So they sell away their produce if any at the time of harvest.

Illegal control of land by non-aborigines. Most of the wet lands available in the Agency areas are owned by non-aborigines, who have got the lands transferred to their names by fraudulent means. As a result of that the aborigines are compelled to go up the hills and take to shifting cultivation. Many of the aborigines are landless labourers who for the most part of year depend on the jungle supplies for their living.

All these circumstances combined together keep the aborigines at the lowest condition of continued poverty and want. Though centuries have passed by the problem of the aborigines is still there. So long as the hill people were isolated they devel-

oped their own manners of life without any interference from outsiders. With the march of time and the development of means of communication the tribals are no longer isolated and their contact with the men of the Plains has brought into existence several new problems which threaten to wipe out or completely absorb the aborigines into the general mass of population. They may be said to be suffering from inferiority complex. Drink, disease, malnutrition and debt are at work to handicap their development. There is already a large number of landless labourers among them. The holdings are small and the food production is insufficient. Poda cultivation considerably reduced the area of forests and the soil erosion is serious. What little they grow and earn goes into the pockets of the middle men and money-lenders. These prevailing circumstances confront the Government with very serious and acute problems. The average annual income and expenditure statement of an average Adibasi family of the District given below will indicate that the expenditure exceeds the income to a large extent.

Statement showing the annual income of a typical aborigine from his produce and the annual expenditure to maintain his family

Total income from produce		Expenditure to maintain the family of 4 members i. e., 2 adults and 2 children		Remarks
Nature of crops which the aborigine grows	Value of the crops in rupees	Commodities required by the aborigine	Expenditure in rupees per annum	Deficit or surplus in rupees
1	2	3	4	5

		Food	Per day	Remarks	
Sua	Rs. 25/-			Average income from produce per annum	} 470/-
Gonga	15/-				
Maize	20/-	2 seers of rice per day	0-10-0	Average expenditure of an aborigine family of 2 adults and 2 children of 10 years of age	} 655/-
Jhudongo	5/-	2 seers of Sua	0-6-0		
Paddy on dry lands	} 50/-				
Paddy on wet lands					
Ragi	150/-	} 1 seer of Dhali on average	} 0-2-0	Therefore deficit per annum	} 655-470 = 185
Termeric	150/-				
Caster seed	10/-	} Other articles - salt, dry chillies, fish etc.	} 0-1-6		
Red gram	25/-				
Horse gram	2/-				
Rs. 467/- or 470/-					
		Curry	6-8-0		
		Tobacco	0-1-0		
			<u>Rs. 7-5-6</u>		

Added

1

2

3

4

5

Cloth

Male :-

1 Wearing cloth	Rs 5-0-0
1 Gamancha	1-8-0
1 Towel	1-0-0
1 Duppati	3-0-0

Rs 10-8-0

Female :-

1 Wearing cloth	6-0-0
Wearing small size	2-8-0
Duppati	3-0-0

Rs 11-8-0

See :-

Gamanchas 2	2-0-0
Towel 1	1-0-0
Small Duppati 1	1-0-0
Banno 1	1-0-0

Rs 6-0-0

Daughter :-

Small orsals 2	2-8-0
Duppati	1-8-0

Rs 4-0-0

Sickness

Drink	50-0-0
Agricultural expenditure (i. e.)	40-0-0
ploughs, seeds etc.	

Total

775-12-0 or
770-0-0

Economic protections given so far

1. Abolition of miscellaneous mamuls and commutation of "Sanja Mamuls"

As already mentioned in the year 1949 Government issued orders that all mamuls which did not have any relation to land should be abolished. By this order although the relief was substantial in most of the cases the "Sanja Mamuls" and Cist Mamuls were found to be unnecessarily exorbitant and this mamul has also been commuted to cash rent. By this the aborigines are relieved of payment of all kinds of mamuls which previously never gave a chance to the Adibans to improve their lot. The mamul system was mainly responsible for emigration of the Adibans of this district to Assam hills, sale of their land to non-tribals and their continued indebtedness.

2. To stop the transfer of land by the hillmen to the non-hillmen Government have prohibited such transfers of land by hillmen to non-hillmen without permission of the competent authority. The law has been there since long but now it is more rigorously enforced.

3. To combat exploitation by money lenders the Orissa money-lenders Act of 1939 has been extended to the Agency areas under which the money lenders are required to get themselves registered, charge moderate rate of interest and maintain proper accounts and grant receipts.

Economic measures

The aborigines have lapsed into a life of economic in action and mental lethargy on account of various reasons. For amelioration of the condition of the aborigines programme has been drawn up. Some of the measures taken up are given below.

1. For proper marketing of the agricultural and other forest produce of the aborigines Government have started Multipurpose Co operative Societies in the tribal areas. Though the number of such Societies is very small at present it is being increased from year to year.

2. To provide the "daily" necessities of life of the aborigines at reasonable prices Government have started some Fair Price Shops at central villages which are working satisfactorily.

3. Standard weights and measures are being introduced to save the aborigines from the exploitation of the middlemen.

4. For improvement of agriculture Minor Irrigation Projects have been executed and the tribals are being supplied with plough bullocks, improved seeds and manure and agricultural implements free of cost. Demonstration Farms are also being established in the tribal areas to impart necessary training to the Adibasis in improved methods of agriculture.

5. To wean the Adibasis away from Poda cultivation and to provide them with settled cultivation and other amenities of life Adibasi colonies are being established where the Adibasi families are given financial aid for construction of their houses, purchase of bullocks, seeds and manure, agriculture implements. They are provided with 5 acres of land per head with irrigation facilities.

6. Means of communication are being improved. The interior villages of the tribal areas are being linked with the main roads which will help the Adibasis in proper marketing of their Agriculture and other forest produce.

7. For improvement of education among the Adibasis special type of schools named as Ashram Schools have been started where along with general education up to M. E. Standard training is imparted in various crafts. In the Ashram Schools the Adibasi pupils are given monthly stipend of Rs. 20/- P.M. The Adibasi students reading in other educational institutions are also given stipends, lumpsums and other educational facilities.

8. National Extension Service Blocks have been opened in the tribal areas to take up various schemes for the economic and social improvement of the aborigines and developing the areas.

It may however be admitted that the enactments and measures have not achieved much success mainly for the reason that due to their illiteracy, ignorance, abject poverty, age-old oppressions and exploitations they are not aware of their rights and able to take full advantage of the facilities extended. But it is a fact that the measures taken by Government for their economic improvement are appreciated by them and they demand more

facilities now. All the same their poverty and extreme backwardness is a problem of such vast magnitude that measures taken by Government can hardly be expected to solve it in any effective manner within so short a period. It is, however, hoped that the successful implementation of the welfare measures

taken up now and opening up of communication in the tribal areas, thus bringing them in close contact with the outside world, will before long enable the Adivasis to take their rightful place in the economic and social structure of the country.



Justice by Oaths and Ordeals among Dafflas

Padmadhar Saha

The Dafflas are mainly found in Kameng and Subansiri Frontier division N.E.F.A. They are also sparsely distributed in districts of Darrang and North Lakhimpur, Assam. The Dafflas constitute an important section of N.E.F.A. tribes and their population is 1,50,000. (on 10th May, 1956, the Prime Minister furnished this figure on Daffla population in N. E. F. A. as desired by Janab Amjad Ali. The above figure is only rough and based on local estimates as no regular census has been taken so far.)

In the year 1955, the writer carried out field research among the Dafflas of Charduar and Kimin. Charduar is nearly 44 miles from Tezpur and for many years it was the headquarter of the political officer, Balipata Frontier Division. Balipata Frontier Division, as such no longer exists and this area is now transferred to Darrang district. At Charduar there are

four chiefly populated Daffla villages. Kimin is a base camp of Subansiri frontier division. The writer also had the opportunity to collect information from many hill Dafflas, who in winter month came down to the plains for trade.

Among the Dafflas, oaths and ordeals are the traditional methods of determining the guilt or innocence of persons charged with crime. Cases of petty theft are very frequently settled by means of oaths. The practice of making the accused pass through some ordeals is now rare, and Dafflas of younger generation in Charduar area have not witnessed any in their life. However ordeals are even now resorted to in the interior tracts to adjudge cases of serious nature.

Ordinary oaths.— The Dafflas have firm belief in oath and that is why petty cases are always settled by this means. When something is stolen the owner of the property privately approaches the suspected culprit and tries to

persuade him to return it. The former however must have sufficient grounds for suspicion, otherwise it creates blood between the accused and himself. If the accused person denies it, the complainant informs the villagers about it, whereupon the villagers ask the accused to prove his innocence by oath. If the accused person cannot prove his innocence by the recognised method of oath, he will be considered guilty and he will have to compensate for the lost article.

If the accused agrees to take oath, a day is fixed for the same. On the appointed day the accused takes oath in presence of the elderly members of the village.

The procedure for taking oath is as follows.

The medicine-man (*Sakajutter*) utters incantations at the time of taking oath. The accused person bites a tooth of tiger saying "If I am telling lie the tiger will kill me". Similarly oaths are taken by placing a bit of earth in the mouth of the accused who utters "If I am telling lie I shall go inside the earth. If the oath is performed by taking rice in mouth, it is supposed that the performer will run short of paddy next year and it is taken by keeping a 'Dor' in

between the two sets of teeth he will get severe injury from sharp weapons.

Oath near a Sacred Stone (*Sak-dingling*)—According to the information collected the ordinary oaths are taken only in case of theft. In case of adultery and other sexual offences, oaths are taken near a sacred stone in Betgarh Village of Charduar, there is a small upright stone under a tree which they call *Sak*. No villager defiles the area near the stone nor does any one point his finger at it. They believe that there resides in that stone an evil spirit called '*Sak*'. In cases of sex offences one has to take the '*Sak-dingling*' here.

About five years ago, one youngman, Tabu, of Betgarh Village had adulterous relations with a young married woman, Yamog. Yamog's husband, Taseng came to know about it, and informed Punj Wela, the village headman. On being asked by the village elders Tabu and Yamog confessed their guilt. At the same time they promised not to repeat it in future. Yamog's husband was not satisfied with the confession. He asked Tabu and his wife to swear near *Sak stone* in order to prevent future recurrence of their illicit relation.

A day was fixed for that and on the appointed day Pinji Weli who is also an expert medicine-man sacrificed a dog near the *Sari*. The liver of the dog was kept near the image and then he invoked the spirit. First Taba touched both the stone and sacrificed dog's liver with his left hand and uttered, "I will not do so in future. If I commit such an offence I shall suffer from bad disease." Yemog also took the oath in the same manner. But both of them indulged in illicit relations again even after the *Sari-dangdang* and eventually fled away to North Lakhimpur Sub-division. Pinji Weli was glad to inform me that both of them later fell victims to bad skin diseases.

Pinji Weli asserted that if some one commits adultery after *Sari-dangdang* the oath breaker is sure to suffer from some bad disease in their sex organs. But at the same time, he assured that an expert medicine-man like him could cure such maladies by some magical performances if the guilty person confesses it. Such a remedy, however entails a good deal cost on the party concerned. Few years back a youngman committed adultery. When the public

came to know about it, the guilty persons were compelled to take oath. But after the *Sari-dangdang* they again indulged in adultery and both of them suffered from some serious diseases in their sex organs. The youngman succumbed to it. The woman approached Pinji and requested to cure her. Pinji performed some magical ceremonies and she was cured. Pinji took a good sum from her as remuneration.

These are the common forms of oath practised by the Dulas. They have firm belief in the efficacy of the oath as a means of determining the innocence or guilt of persons, and all my informants are convinced of the evil consequences of false swearing.

Ordeals—As mentioned before, the ordeals are rarely resorted to and that too in serious cases such as murder and theft of very valuable properties such as Tibetan bells, beads etc. There are two forms of ordeals. One is *Ordeals-dangdang* that is proving oneself by introducing the hands into boiling water. It is firmly believed that boiling water does not injure an innocent person. The second form of ordeal is called *Rakder-Dangdang*. Rakder means iron. Here instead of boiling water a

a red hot piece of iron is placed on one palm of the accused. Few green leaves are kept over the palm and over it the red hot iron piece is placed. It is believed that the red hot iron burns the hand of the guilty alone whereas the innocent do not even feel the sensation of heat.

The following are the details of *Chudang-dinghang* which took place about ten years ago in Hudubari Village, Charduar. The then Political Officer of Charduar was also present on the spot. One evening Rayom, a villager of Bharali took a large quantity of rice-beer at Hare's house in Hudubari village. Hare's wife was then pregnant. Rayom under the influence of rice-beer suddenly hit Hare's wife near her breast. The woman died at once. Rayom immediately took to his heels. Hare informed the villagers that Rayom killed his wife. But Rayom denied it.

The Political Officer was informed about the incident. The Political Officer asked the villagers to decide the case among themselves. The villagers decided to settle the case by means of the ordeals of "*Chudang-dinghang*". Both Rayom and Hare agreed to it. But the villagers suspected Hare also

and asked to prove his innocence by means of this ordeal.

The villagers cleared a portion of jungle near Bharali river and in that space a small enclosure was made by means of wooden poles with two entrances. Within the enclosed space a wooden platform was raised in slanting position. The medicineman and the assistant medicineman with Hare and Rayom had to spend the previous night in the jungle. They were not allowed to take any hot thing. Further they were not allowed to make fire. No one approached them that night.

On the appointed day, the men and women of all the Dafila villages of Charduar assembled on the spot. Pregnant women were not allowed to witness the ordeal. It is feared that the foetus inside the womb is harmed if a pregnant woman happens to witness it.

At about 10 A. M. fire was lighted inside the enclosed space by friction method with pieces of bamboo and cane. It is believed that the fire will stence kindle if the person or persons ready for taking oath are actually guilty. The fire was fanned with a shield. Someone brought water from the Bharali river in a bamboo pail

The water must be collected from a big river. A tiger tooth, a small stone, a small quantity of sand and some leaves and barks of tree were kept in the water. Then the water was boiled over the fire. The medicineman got upon the platform and invoked the spirit. Before the final ordeal both the complainant and the accused had to pare their nails, because any quantity of slack time inside the nails was supposed to nullify the effect of the ordeal. They also had to wash their hands clean as the spittle and such impure things on the hand were believed to make it easy to introduce the hand into the boiling water.

Rayom came out from the jungle with a 'dao' in his right hand. He had only lower garment and his hair was dishevelled. (The male Dailas tie their hair into a knot in front of their head. At the time of ordeal his hair was not tied into knot according to their custom.) He entered the enclosed space shouting something very loudly and stonced introduced his left hand into the boiling water. On examination it was found that his hand was severely burnt. Hare had to do the same

to prove himself not guilty of making a false complaint. When he had done so it was found that his hand was also burnt.

Before the ordeal was undertaken the Daila villagers solemnly declared that the hands of the innocent persons could not be burnt by boiling water. But as the hands of both the accused and the complainant were burnt, none of the persons could establish innocence. Both Rayom and Hare had to pay one bullock, one Assamese silk cloth, one 'dao' each to the medicineman. Also they had to pay a fine of one pair of bullock which were killed and the flesh was distributed among the audience.

A similar case of ordeal took place in Rongajan village. Rongajan is in the Lakhimpur district, near Kaman, Subansiri Frontier division, N. E. F. A. Gamar Tayo, an elderly member of Rongajan village lost some of his valuable properties such as Tibetan bell beads and brass dishes. He petitioned the Political Officer that he suspected Pil Kecha, another elderly member of his village and prayed for redress. Pil Kecha denied the charge. The latter, further, asserted that the former

brought forth the charge against him in order to bypass him out of personal grudge. As there was no eye witness of the incident the Political Officer ordered them to settle the case by means of ordeal. They agreed to it. On the day of the ordeal some office assistants of Kamin and some interpreters were also present there.

It so happened that the accused PI Kecha brought out the stone from the boiling water without injury. So PI Kecha's supporters went to Gamar's house, killed some of his domestic pigs and the flesh was distributed among the audience. Gamar had to pay a fine of five bullocks, one Tibetan bell and one brass dish to PI Kecha for causing him undeserved harassment.

Shri Rajani Gogoi, assistant Political Officer Kamin recently

retiredly informed me that the Dalas have turn belief in such ordeals. But he also expressed the opinion that a man can often turn the opinion of the community in his favour if he can gather enough courage to introduce his hand into boiling water and make a gesture of being unhurt, regardless of the real consequences. After the act of ordeal the atmosphere usually becomes so noisy that one cannot examine the hand carefully.

'Chodang-dangden' is a rare practice, and one asking the other for *'Chodang'* is something like inviting the other for a fight. If after the ordeal the alleged person is proved not guilty his supporters raid the house of the complainant and forcibly take away his valuable belongings.



The test of a good Ashram School

Ambalal P. Vyas

60 Ashram schools have been started by the State Government for educating the tribal boys and girls. Out of these five are meant exclusively for tribal girl students. Lots of rupees have been spent on non-recurring expenditure for establishing these Ashram Schools, and lots are being spent each year for running them. As the tribals were neglected and remained isolated for centuries the national Government is, each year spending these vast sums as a special facility to educate the tribal boys and girls and transform them into efficient, disciplined and patriotic citizens.

When such vast sums are spent annually out of the unaffordable resources of the country it is our duty to see that every pice is well spent and bears desired fruits. This is a great National investment, perhaps much more important than most of our other costlier projects, as the general well-being, character building and arround education of the children of more than two crores of the tribals are involved in this

vast investment and grand experiment.

It is the duty of all of us, supervising, inspecting and executive officers as well as the Headmasters and other instructors to see that the Ashrams where lots of rupees collected from the coffers of even the poorest country men in the form of direct and indirect taxes are being annually spent are properly run and efficiently managed.

What are the tests of a good Ashram ? Ashrams like other schools are no doubt educational institutions, but they are much more than ordinary schools where the students are day scholars and spend only one-fourth of their time daily in receiving instructions. An Ashram School is a combination of school and home. The students pass all the twenty four hours there in the company of teachers and other comrades. The responsibility of an Ashram School is much more than that of an ordinary school. To my mind therefore homely atmosphere, harmony, spirit of

co-operation and team spirit are as important as general studies in an Ashram School.

I however lay the highest importance to the purity of atmosphere in an Ashram School, because without that no progress is possible in other spheres like studies teaching of crafts, spinning agriculture and games. It is the bounden duty of the Headmaster of an Ashram school to try his utmost to maintain the purity and peacefulness of the Ashram atmosphere. He fails in his duty miserably where this is polluted by internal quarrels, either between the Headmasters and other teachers or between students and teachers. The Headmaster is expected to be an efficient teacher, a loving guardian and a strong but tactful superintendent of the institution. His efficiency, honesty, equity and sense of justice will be daily put to test on several occasions. As the head of the institution he has to deal with higher inspecting officers, other teachers, Ashram students and the guardians and relatives of Ashram students. Thousands of rupees pass through his hands; in spite of his honesty if he can not maintain the

accounts and stock books carefully and up-to-date doubts will be raised about his character. If he is honest as well as efficient and tactful other subordinate teachers will not be in a position to raise their heads against him and create trouble or succeed in breaking the peace of the institution. If he behaves like a loving father towards the Ashram inmates, both students and teachers, and pays constant attention to their well being and convenience the tribal students proverbially loyal, dutiful law-abiding and obliging will never go against him or be a tool in the hands of disobedient subordinate teachers.

I have found on several occasions that whenever and wherever the peaceful atmosphere of the Ashram has been polluted the progress of that Ashram in all spheres has suffered. I have found with great sorrow that at times even some of the officers who think of only administrative matters take delight in creating schisms amongst the teachers or between the teachers and the students as a part of policy to know the internal conditions of an Ashram school. If the officer

is paying regular visits and is periodically examining the account books and stock books thoroughly, corruption will not have any basis to start, thrive or continue. Rotten things will be automatically eliminated and meet with a natural death. Policy of "Divide and Rule" does not deserve to be applied in educa-

tional institutions, much less in Ashrams which are meant for a nobler purpose of all round education and character building.

I therefore, believe that if the purity of the Ashram atmosphere is maintained other good results are bound to follow. To my mind this is the real test of a good Ashram school.





Ashram Herd

Traditional Methods of Treatment of Leprosy Among the Mikirs

Bhuban MjDas & Tarun Chandra Sharma

The Mikirs, having a total numerical strength of 91,953 individuals (Census report of India 1951) constitute an important part of the tribal population of Assam. They are mainly confined to the United Mikir Hills and North Cachar district, though they are found sporadically in other districts as well.

It has been reported by the Mikir Hills Seva Kendra, Sariajan (Mikir hills) that leprosy occurs in very high frequency among the Mikirs. During October 1957 an investigation was carried out by the authors among the Mikirs of Sariajan and its surrounding villages. Data were collected from among 80 families comprising 576 individuals. It was found

that 4.14% of the population under consideration are affected by the disease.

The present paper, however, deals with the indigenous methods employed by the local Mikirs of Sariajan and its neighbouring areas for the treatment of the disease. In that connection, in order to understand the nature of treatment, the factors which are believed to be responsible for causing the disease, have also been dealt with.

Cause of the disease.—The Mikirs believe that leprosy (chi-t) is caused by python (Rupi), which is abundant in the Mikir hills. If a man happens to touch the blood or the body of the python he can hardly escape from the

* Sariajan is a small locality situated at a distance of about 17 miles towards north-east from Manipal Road. It lies near the border of Bongaigaon and United Mikir hills and North Cachar districts. The headquarter of the Mikir hills Seva Kendra is situated there.

disease. The python can spread the disease in an indirect way as well. Sometimes it contaminates the water of the hilly streams which are the only sources of water supply of the Mikirs. The contamination is believed to be caused when the excreta of python happens to mix with water. Any body using that contaminated water may fall victim of the disease. In one village called Betabat we came across a person † of forty years of age, who killed a python and touched the blood of the latter, thereby became victim of leprosy.

It is a common belief among the Mikirs that sometimes this disease is caused due to an act of sin or violation of existing traditional social and religious customs. When a member of a family is affected by the disease, the whole family is believed to be under the influence of some evil spirit. The identity of the spirit is determined by divination which again determines the types of rites of rituals to be performed in order to get rid of the evil spirit.

Diagnosis of the disease—

Although the Mikirs have no knowledge of pathology, the age long experiences have made them able to diagnose the disease efficiently. According to the various symptoms that the patients suffering from leprosy develop, the disease is classified into the following categories by the Mikirs.

1. **Ehragt**: In this type of leprosy the patient becomes a ricket. His flesh and skin wither and the fingers of the hands and the feet show deformity.
2. **Ejot**: This is a very dangerous and corrosive type of leprosy. The fingers of hands and feet of the patient are eaten up right from the tip to the root.
3. **Eder**: Nodules in the face, nose and ear are the main symptoms of this type of leprosy. The nose becomes deformed and yellowish patches develop in the body.
4. **Hetk**: In this type of leprosy the patient suffers more

† As it appears from the conversation with the local people that they do not like the publication of the name of the affected person, the name of the particular person could not be given.

internally. External symptoms a few, but the patient dies very soon.

Treatment.— The indigenous methods of treatment of leprosy among the Mikurs can be divided into two categories—(1) the magical cure and (2) the medicinal cure. At the occurrence of the disease, they first take recourse to the magical cure by worshipping and offering sacrifices to the deity presiding over such illness. They worship the deity several times successively and if no sign of improvement of the patient is seen, the cause of the disease is then believed to be due to personal act of sin or violation of prevalent customs.

The medicinal cure consists of applying a kind of indigenous herb. When it is applied upon the leprous patches it burns the skin and the flesh making a severe wound. As per information, the wound may be healed after six months or a year leaving a burnt patch upon the body of the patient. Some people having such burnt patch in their bodies were found in this locality. Only the professional medicine-man, who prescribes such treatment, knows the herb. The

name of the herb is kept in secret in order to preserve their profession. We tried in all possible ways but failed to collect a specimen of the herb. We were told that there is not a single medicine-man in this locality under consideration and as such when it is required, a medicine-man is called from a distant village.

The magical methods applied in treating the leprosy are of two types—one is preventive in nature and the other is curative.

The worship of *Dee Annon* (*Dee* deity) is performed in every household once in a year (generally after the harvest) as a preventive measure against leprosy. The nature of worship related to the treatment of this disease is described below. The following articles are required for the worship:

1. One he goat and one hen.
2. One *harbow* (a gourd vessel filled with rice-beer known as *Bar Akay*) and one bottle of *Bar Arak*, (another variety of rice-beer).
3. A small piece of bamboo about six inches in length for divination.

4. A small quantity of sun-dried rice.
5. A small quantity of rice flour
6. One brass-ring.
7. One silver rupee coin (called *Kien Tsien*)

The professional priest known as *Tshien* conducts the rites and the sacrifice. The worship is performed in the jungle or at a considerable distant place from the family campus. There is no selected place for such purpose. The place is arbitrarily selected. A small mound of earth is raised at the place of worship upon which two models of snakes made of clay are placed cross-wise keeping the heads pointing to the same direction. The rice flour mixed with water is sprinkled over the mound. A plantain leaf is spread upon the ground surface in front of the heads of the snake models. A small quantity of sun-dried rice is kept upon the plantain leaf in two rows each consisting of three divisions. The *Shan-ko* and the *Her-shu* are placed by the side of the mound. The brass ring is kept upon one division of rice. This arrangement being made, the *Tshien* touches the hen and the goat with the hands and invokes the name of

the deity and utters *mantra* which may be summarised as follows.

"*O-sher Kien* (*Kien=king*). We have given you so many things. We have brought the hen and the goat for you. Kindly you come and enjoy and take away the disease from our family." Then the *Tshien* cuts half-way the neck of the hen. The hen is allowed to fall on the ground which comes vehemently on the ground before its lifeless body comes to rest. *Tshien* then, observed divination examining the body and the head of the hen. It is said that if the sacrificed hen lies on the ground on its dorsal or on its ventral surface, the omen is bad. But if it comes to rest on its lateral sides left or right, the omen is good. Similarly if the head happens to move inside the feather or the wings, the omen is believed to be inauspicious, but otherwise the omen is good and particularly if the head is in the direction of the house of the worshipper. The stomach of the hen is dissected and its entrails are scrutinised. Good omen is forecasted when the entrails are found in such a manner that there is no sign of rapture in the integuments which connects the loops of the entrails. Good omen implies the pleasure

of the deity and this means the cure of the disease. Then the *Phakow* sacrifices the goat by completely severing its body. The liver of the goat is taken out for observing divination by the *Phakow*. Good omen is indicated by the presence of red spots in the liver. Black spot indicates bad omen. The liver heart and a little flesh of the goat and the hen are cooked by him for the deity. The hoof, ear and the tail of the goat are offered to the deity along with rice, cooked flesh and a little rice beer (*Mur Akong*). The silver rupee coin is dipped in the rice-beer before the latter is offered to the deity. The *Phakow* conducts another divination with the help of a bamboo piece. The piece of bamboo is first cut longitudinally into two pieces with one stroke of a knife and the pieces are allowed to fall on the ground. The omen is forecasted by examining the manner in which they have fallen on the ground. If the pieces lie on the ground showing both dorsal or both ventral surfaces respectively, the omen is taken to be bad. When one piece shows dorsal surface while the other shows ventral surface then it is a sign of good omen. At the end of this

divination, *Phakow* beats the brass-ring nine times with a knife striking the heavenly bodies and earthly objects which are believed to have observed the sacrifice, to remain as witnesses of the performance.

Women are not allowed to participate or to witness the sacrifice. But, they enjoy their respective shares of the sacrificial feast.

Phakow Worship—This worship is performed in a family when ever any member of the family develops leprosy. It is performed in the jungle. *Phakow* conducts the rites and sacrifices. The following articles are required for the worship.

1. One pig (big or small)
2. Two hens.

Other items are same as those used in the *Dor* worship.

A mound of earth is raised at the place of worship and the models of snakes are arranged in the same manner as described in connection with the *Dor* worship. The procedure of the sacrifice and the divination are same as in the case of *Dor* worship.

One *Phakow* by name Cham Ingti of Churu Bongpa village (Sachapjan) claims that he has

cured several leprous patients by performing *Thala* worship. He told us that his father was a renowned *Thalee* in this locality who cured many leprosy patients by the traditional method of treatment.

Another interesting procedure of magical treatment has also been reported. As per information, a python which is held responsible for spreading such disease, is consumed by the leper. The python whenever it is found, is killed and cut into pieces. The leper takes a piece of python flesh and goes to a river bank where the flesh is roasted for

consumption. He eats the roasted flesh and goes to the river where he swims against the current and while swimming he leaves off his *dhotee* (under-garment) and comes out of the water without any cloth. Hereafter he is given a new cloth to wear.

The *Mikurs* who seem to be greatly indifferent and ignorant about the modern medical treatment, are the victims of many fatal diseases. They never believe that any medicine can cure a disease. So the first series of treatments in case of illness employed by them, consist of a chain of worships and sacrifices†.

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Glimpses of Aborigines Education

Nityananda Das

An independent nation is as much proud of its educational system as it is of its mineral resources, metropolises or scientific discoveries. Particularly among the Asian countries the growth of national ideas and national outlook have a recent development. Due to long period of subjection and colonial administration most of the Asian countries have remained backward educationally. After the second world war a few independent States have emerged in Asia and the national ideals which were brewing for a long period have crystallised. Except Japan which was hybrid of east and west, no other country has an educational system fitted into the national ideal.

Besides this general problem there is another important and thought provoking issue. India has nearly two crores of aborigi-

nal population. These tribal people since the primeval time have adopted deceptible fringes of the subcontinent. In the forest clad hills and plateaus they are living from the historic past and have been mostly cut off from the civilisation. Their Aryan conquerors drove them away to the present habitation and since then they have been contented in their respective dwellings. The British rule carefully kept them away from the light, and the administration advised by the missionaries did not go beyond imparting selective education to the tribal people. Various missions established their convents. In this context the aborigines of India have been excluded from all possible systems of education except their own methods of training to the young men and women.

The social scientists at the

present time have shown that culture of any people is an integrated product of all the institutions and no part of culture can be analysed devoid of its context. Education in man is the reawakening of his sleeping faculties. Man is a rational and social animal. His rationality and social behaviours are the products of constant interaction of milieu and education. By Education we cannot take a partial view like the lectures in the class room or the routine duties in a school. Education builds individual personality. Therefore it is needless to say that a scientific outlook for education should incorporate the different values and ideals which a nation finds essential for her citizens.

Looking amidst the tribal life of this subcontinent one is often amazed. Their quaint customs and practices and peculiar modes of life have drawn curiohunters for more than fifty years who collected at maintaining a living museum of the tribes, for their romantic pursuits and intellectual manoeuvres. Fortunately anthropology at the present time has shaken off this garb and has emerged with the hope for the

survival of humanity inspite of the danger of the threatened destruction by the destructive weapons. Understanding of man by man has been the sole aim of the world at the present juncture of uncertainty; and through this alone it will be possible for man to give up wars and get engaged in constructive developments. Various scholars of modern anthropology have now come out with wide experiences from the tribes of the world. From their reports and publications we get enough materials to obtain glimpses of the educational systems prevalent among these tribes.

The life in any tribal area is not as smooth as bed of roses. Men, women and children working for ten hours a day hardly earn their subsistence for eight months in a year. The rest of the time they have to depend on the collections from the forests and other sources. Of course, there are certain tribes who are ignorant of the agricultural practices, and live either on horticulture or collection. Therefore, adequate premium is levelled on work. The dignity of labour is the sole dignity of the simpler societies. Every body attains

skill in all the essential services, and are jacks of all trades. Therefore children of the age of ten or below share the duties of the adults and participate in daily activities. Grazing cattle and collecting fodder for them are the principal duties of the children. But they also take part in ploughing and harvesting. Idleness is universally detested. Simultaneously coercion is avoided. Margaret Mead in her book "Co-operation and Competition among the Primitive Peoples", has lucidly depicted the social objectives of thirteen tribes. She has taken into consideration the age development, sanctions, internal and external securities, as well as the goal drive in these thirteen societies. She has shown how in the three individualistic societies the entire upbringing of the children is based on sordid self interest. The orientations of the individuals in these societies are built up, to achieve self attainments without caring for other members. There is bitter competition among the four societies she studied. The mere presence of the others is taken as a competing factor and must be surpassed through all possible means. But the picture changes abruptly in

the co-operative societies, where the association of the individuals is taken as an improvement over the single ones, and even all forms of competition are rooted out from the early childhood. Accordingly the educational system is devised in these six societies, to achieve their respective goals.

Ruth Benedict has also shown how among the Kwakwaka'wakw Indians of the North West coast of America the children are made to think in terms of competition and they are moulded to acquire wealth and finally destroy these. Among the Dobuans of the Pacific similarly the traits of suspicion grow from the childhood, and later paranoid personalities of the Dobuans are the outcome of an identical training of the children. But the divergence in Zaniculture where co-operation is the cardinal principle of human behaviour the children are treated equally with the adults and the children are made to think that they are to play or sport the later life with the others. Corer in his study of the Lepchas of Cis Himalayan region has shown how the children are trained to be patient and peaceful.

Among the Oraons the Dormitory institution caters the need of education to the young. This dormitory or Jankadga has compulsory membership. The boys and girls above the age of eight or ten are eligible for membership. Once they are members they have to carry out all the obligations and duties of the society. The period of novices is no doubt a very hard period during which the Oraon boys undergo all sorts of hazards. They must obey the orders of the elders and perform the duties according to their instructions. By and by they acquire skill and proficiency in various fields and then only they are taken as full fledged members of the society. The Dormitory is the most important institution among several tribes of India. Of course among the Chotanagpur tribes there are separate dormitories for bachelors and virgins. But among the Gonds of Bastar and other tribes there is only one for both.

This institution has been severely criticised from all the quarters. The missionaries have constantly deprecated the practice, and have shown the large spread of immorality due to this

practice. The Hindus of the subcontinent have even levelled the premarital sex relations as prostitution. A first-hand field investigation has revealed that among these tribes sexual frustration is practically lacking. Boys and girls know early the mystery of sex and accordingly accept it as common happenings of daily life. They neither suffer from any inhibition nor lead themselves to imagination.

Sex is a biogenic primary need of men either in the Tundras or in the tropics and its satisfaction is essential for them. Therefore to think survival without sexual satisfaction is rather absurd. It may be possible for the sages. Researches among men and women of the civilized societies clearly reveal the large incidence of sexual maladjustments. Work of Catherine Davis among the American students has shown that more than 60 percent of students of both the sexes practice homosexuality. No data among the Indian students have been collected. But it can be conjectured that if any work is conducted among our students, it will provide surprising facts. Among the most civilized Americans, sex

offences are growing every day and men and women in that society are full of inhibitions.

Are these not formidable facts requiring careful attention? At the present time the American educational system is emphasizing the inclusion of sex education as a part of school curriculum. Therefore without reservation it can be said that what the most civilized people are proposing now are being practised among our tribal people since ages. Moreover the large number of mental diseases, which are ironically said as the boon of civilization, according to the psychiatrists, arise due to sexual inhibitions and mal-adjustments. But I gathered from the reports from the Mental Hospitals at Ranchi, that, hardly any tribal people come there for treatment for mental disorders on account of sexual mal adjustments. Homosexuality and masturbation are practically unknown, among the tribal people.

Marital and conjugal life among the tribes I studied is a very smooth one. Obedience to the parents and superiors is imbibed among children from early childhood. But the obedience is not sought by coercion.

Many children reported that they did not remember to have been beaten more than once or twice by their parents. Those were due to the negligence of the child in performing the regular routine duties more than once and due to considerable loss arising out of that. Children from puberty are treated as equals and enjoy considerable freedom. Of course among several tribes of Africa there are hard initiation rites. They are the indicators of manhood, and every young man and woman has to undergo them to be full fledged members of the society. Then and then he or she can marry and live as respectable citizen. All these and many more will clearly reveal the great important levelling among the tribes on work and labour.

Now we can analyse the change in the tribal life due to the impact of modern civilization. It is an established fact that no culture or society is static. The institutions there in, are constantly acquiring new traits. Even changes are bound to crop up from within though the culture concerned may be insulated from the external influences. Therefore son of the tribes can be said

to be out of the orbit of technical civilization. Most of the Indian tribes are now shaking off their old moorings and are coming in large numbers to the open arena where contact with the civilized people are influencing change. The constitution of India has envisaged to assimilate these tribes within ten years from its inauguration. Therefore the policy of the present administration is the assimilation of the tribes into Indian social pattern within this time-limit. The various state Governments have opened separate Departments for the welfare of tribal people and the Union Government have a Commissioner for the Scheduled Tribes. The Union and the State Governments are providing large number of scholarships to the students hailing from the Scheduled Tribes. Moreover other types of financial help are accorded to them to promote education among the tribes. Slowly and gradually large number of tribal youths are coming to various schools and colleges and are also receiving technical education. But the main question which raises controversy among the tribes themselves and also among others

whether those measures are adequate to enlighten the tribal people. No doubt due to the efforts of the missionaries there are a handful of English educated persons among the various tribes. After the attainment of independence the Governments themselves have undertaken this function. There are evidently differences among the educated and the noneducated sections of the tribal population. Those boys and girls who are being educated in the institutions acquire new values and attitudes. Their lives and behaviours take dramatic turn. They are cut off from their moorings and hence provide puzzling issues before the educationists. During my field work I have come across several tribal students. I have also taken stock of their attitudes and values. Among the boys in higher classes a very peculiar cross current is flowing. Their mental stream is flowing along new channels, and they are sceptical about their life. Their parents who would have normally trained them in the day pursuits of life have become defunct personnel and they have little regard for the organs which used to train their minds in the

post. The process of education may be considered from two points of view, the sociological and psychological. The sociological function of education is to transmit the cultural equipments, knowledge, skills, values and sentiments from one generation to the other. The psychological function is the effect on community life and its effect on the members of the society. A four point criteria can be assigned to the education system (a) Methods, (b) Personnel, (c) Contents, (d) The motives and Attitudes, underlying the educational process.

On the above lines we can scrutinize the tribal education in transition. As has been stated earlier among the contemporary tribal people the gulf between the informal education which is imparted at home and the formal education which is imparted in the schools is practically lacking. Except the highly specialised craft or the magical spells there are no specialised organs. Moreover the education is always direct. By direct we mean learning by experiencing. We usually read and are made to understand things which have no relationships in our daily life and which we

sometimes cannot see during our life times. The people of Uttar Pradesh or the Punjab are often told about the sea or the port. But hardly a handful of them get opportunities in their lives to see the sea. This acts as a handicap in their education and learning. We have already seen the personal among the tribes. There are no professional teachers and of course no learned professors. As every body is jack of all trades except the sorcerer or magician the rest are teachers and students simultaneously. Among the preliterate societies the interest of children themselves make them active participants instead of passive recipients. Content of education similarly aims at two main points the individual adjustment to the community and the acquisition of the skills including sex life. Now the last though not least is the motive and attitude underlying the educational process. There is a large grade of sharing the interests of the adult and there is always reciprocal obligation on the part of the adults to understand the handicaps and difficulties of the children. Discipline among the tribes is self evolved, unlike our societies where it is imposed, by

the authorities, prizes are real sources of satisfaction, and the rewards are won for the benefit of the individual in the context of social benefit obtained from his actions. Thus the entire educational system is one of homogeneity and reciprocity. I have said earlier that there is a great deal of difference between the tribal boys who have joined the school and who have not joined. Often their teachers complain that the school students hardly understand abstract formulations. Of course we cannot generalise the statement but it is not absolutely untrue. The indirect method of teaching has not been properly utilised by the tribes. The Government of our States have established Ashram Schools and in them we are imparting education with vocational bias. The boys no doubt also work while they read in the Ashram Schools. At many places the opposition leaders are heard saying, that why our children would get Basic education while the non-tribal boys would go for the English education and then get employments. This is a point for consideration. We cannot say that the system of education prevalent in our coun-

try is good. Starting from emminent leaders to the common men every one is of the opinion that the University degrees are utilised merely as a visa for applying for the services. Besides they create a gap between the reality and the life which our educated boys and girls dream of leading after the termination of their studies.

But that does not mean that the tribal people should be left to their lot. I am on no account a protagonist of segregation policy which I have vehemently opposed earlier. But simultaneously I cannot think in terms of went on destruction of tribal life and their educational process by replacing our system of education. Nowadays the education are keen to find the *discipline* and inductives among our students. Are we to make the tribal boys also undisciplined, who are traditionally disciplined? Definitely not. Therefore the policy on tribal education should be a cautious one and should not disintegrate the tribal life. I do not claim to be an expert educationist. I am merely a humble student of anthropology. Therefore it is not

appropriate for me to suggest an exact educational system for tribal societies. Let the educationists, reformers and politicians think out the problem and the social scientists will make their scientific knowledge and experience available, by fusion of which an effective educational policy may be evolved.

The last but not the least important is the problem of language and script. Almost all the tribal languages have not got scripts. Broadly speaking the interior tribes speak languages belonging to two families Ho, Bhama, Burhoi, Kharas and the languages spoken by the Gonds and Saoras. The Dravidian language is spoken only among the Oraons of Chotanagpur and several southern tribes. The frontier tribes of course speak dialects of Tibeto-Burman and Indo-Burman languages. But none of these languages has got a script. Therefore the question of an uniform language for the tribes is not a minor problem. At the present time the tribes are educated through different regional languages. But there are multiple complaints of lack of reception among the smaller boys. The point is

whether the tribal students are to be educated at the Primary and Secondary stages through the medium of their languages? The most difficult task before a scheme like this to be successful, is the adequate number of trained persons in tribal languages. Particularly enough that section of the tribes who are educated pretend to forget their languages. So how can we expect them to develop their languages. To train sufficient number of teachers to teach them in their respective languages is a process which can be given a start. But again what about the poor non-tribal students in the schools situated in the heart of the tribal areas? They cannot be successfully educated through the medium of the prevalent tribal language.

Hindi in Devnagri script has been accepted as the national language. Therefore one of the objectives of the administration is also to propagate Hindi among non-Hindi speaking population. There is no harm if the tribal people are also made to learn Hindi and regional languages side by side with their languages. One argument of substance is that the tribal languages have not been developed. But can we develop

them and compile their grammars? Missionaries of the past, like Father Hoffman and Rodding have written grammars on tribal languages like Mundari etc. and then why cannot our linguists and grammarians undertake the duty? The second problem is the evolution of suitable scripts for the tribal languages. Scarcely individual efforts have framed scripts on various languages. But these are neither standardised nor generally accepted. In Hyd-

crabad State during Nizam rule a very able Social Anthropologist Dr. Hamendorf at present Professor of London School of African and Oriental Studies studied the problem of script. After long and careful scrutiny, he practically ruled out the prospects of separate scripts. Therefore it is needless to say that the evolution of new scripts is time-taking. The only solution to script problem is the regional scripts or Devanagiri scripts.



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Kuruk Women

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EDITORIAL

The present issue of the 'Adibasi' the journal of the Tribal Research Bureau, Orissa, has been delayed due to certain unforeseen events. There has been acute shortage of printing paper in the market. The management of the journal has also been improved. A new shape has been given to the Journal and it has been decided to publish it both in English and Oriya.

We welcome the formation of a "Central Advisory Board of Anthropology" by Government of India in the Ministry of Education. This is the first effort to co-ordinate Anthropological studies and researches in the country. The University Departments of Anthropology, the Tribal Research Institutions and the Department of Anthropology, Government of India, are all engaged in Anthropological studies and researches. By proper co-ordination of these activities the science will definitely occupy a very prominent place in the country. The first meeting of the Board had been held in Calcutta in the month of March, 1958. At the meeting it was emphasized that there are a large number of real primitive tribes in the State of Orissa and there is need for thorough survey and research among them, for the successful implementation of developmental schemes. The Board also included the study of Kutia and Dangria Kandhas, Sacas and Gadabas within the Five Year Plan of researches in Anthropology.

The Tribal Research Bureau officers have now completed their studies among the Lanjia Sacas, Kandhas and Juanga. The reports contain illuminating data on the above tribes. In addition to the normal course of duties of studying the culture and socio-economic condition of the different tribal communities, the officers of Tribal Research Bureau are engaged in studying the social status of different communities and evaluation of different welfare institutions etc. for the successful implementation of welfare programmes, the advice of Tribal Research Bureau, may be utilised fully.

We invite the administrative officers in the tribal areas, the welfare staff, the social workers and other interested persons to contribute their experiences among the tribes or other communities of Orissa in form of articles.

Managing Editor